

Many reform plans focus on reading, because it is the critical foundation for success in other subjects and in later grades. In most cases, the problems of a student who fails begin early. So must the solutions. We should start by ensuring that all students are able to read by the end of the third grade. Educators widely proclaim that this is a crucial goal. If students have not achieved this standard, they have a very hard time catching up in later grades. The inability to read well handicaps the rest of their studies, and their employment prospects later in life are greatly diminished. In Indiana, as many as a third of all students fall behind by the end of the third grade. Indiana's performance is not unusual—the entire country is failing to meet the challenge of educating all our children.

Mr. President, my first elective office was as a member of the Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners in the mid-1960s. At that time, our school board struggled with basic questions of improvements in educational standards, desegregation of schools, and getting children proper nutrition and immunizations. Since that time, as a mayor and as a Senator, I have followed closely the development of education in America. In some areas we have done well. In other areas, our progress has been disappointing.

But during that time, few developments have encouraged me as much as the advances in comprehensive school reform. There are many reform programs achieving positive results. But to illustrate the concept, I would like to describe one in particular. This is "Success for All," which was developed by Dr. Robert Slavin at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore. Success for All is a great idea that has proven its value in many schools across the country, including 13 in Indiana.

Reading is serious business at a Success for All school. For 90 minutes each day, students are grouped by their reading ability rather than their grade level. This allows students who excel at reading to progress at their own rate, while ensuring that students who fall behind will receive intensive attention to stimulate their progress. To set the tone and importance of the reading period, students proceed silently and purposefully through the hall to their reading group classroom.

Once the period begins, there is a rapid-fire of sequential lessons. Each segment is short enough to maintain the interest and attention of even the most distracted student. The lessons are fun but rigorously structured. Teachers read a story. Then students are involved in reading the words to the story in unison, discussing the story with a partner, then answering questions to test comprehension. At the completion of a successful lesson segment, students choose one of many group cheers. This positive reinforcement both encourages children, and fosters group cooperation.

During the reading period, every staff person in the school is involved in reading. The art teacher or gym teacher may be tutors, for example. Parents also agree to have their children read to them for 20 minutes each night. If this doesn't happen, adults are available to work with the students during the morning school breakfast period.

Because Success for All depends on the commitment of the entire faculty and because it requires such a fundamental change in the way a school operates, Dr. Slavin requires that at least 80 percent of the faculty must approve Success for All by secret ballot.

The discipline and accountability of the program greatly reduce the possibility that students will fail. If a student falls behind, tutoring sessions are set up to get the student caught up. By teaching children to read in the early grades, our schools can avoid holding students back, promoting them with insufficient ability or transferring them out of the normal curriculum to special education courses. Referrals to special education in Success for All schools have been shown to decrease by approximately 50 percent. In schools where Success for All is taught, students learn to read by the third grade. By the fifth grade, students in these schools are testing a full grade level ahead of students in other schools.

I would strongly encourage each of my colleagues to visit a Success for All school, if they have not already done so. I have had the pleasure of visiting Maplewood Elementary School in Wayne Township, Marion County, Washington Elementary in Gary, and Fairfield Elementary in Fort Wayne, which has had Success for All since 1995. In my judgment, anyone who sees Success for All in action will become a believer. I have contacted every school district in my state to suggest that they take a look at Success for All or another comprehensive school reform program based on rigorous research.

Mr. President, the amendment I am offering today would allow more struggling schools to adopt comprehensive school reform programs. These programs are a comparative bargain for our schools and our children when one considers their success at preventing the enormous costs of retention, special education and illiteracy. But many schools need help paying for the start-up costs and the reading materials associated with comprehensive reform programs.

Most of the more than 1,500 schools nationwide that use Success for All fund it with the Federal Title I program. Others have tapped private sources. But increasing funding for the Comprehensive School Reform Program is the most direct way to give more local schools the chance to embrace school-wide reform and transform the lives of their students. The program deserves more support because its positive impact on literacy and the ultimate success of students is so demonstrable.

Each child must learn to read. The quality of life for that child depends upon that single achievement, as does the economic future of our country. I ask my colleagues to support this amendment.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period for the transaction of routine morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA'S TONY DAVIS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am here to discuss the achievements of an outstanding student athlete at an outstanding institution.

Tony Davis, a secondary education major at the University of Northern Iowa—my alma mater—was recently named the NCAA Champion for wrestling in the 149-pound division.

Tony was born and raised in Chicago.

Before coming to UNI, he wrestled at Mount Carmel High School in Chicago and Iowa Central Community College, where he received two national junior college championships.

Tony chose to come to UNI for two reasons: to wrestle at a Division I school and to study to be a teacher and coach.

Before the 1999–2000 season, Tony was ranked first in the nation in his weight division. And, he maintained that ranking and came to the NCAA finals with a 26–1 record.

Tony's life philosophy is this: focus and dedication lead to success at all levels.

Looking at the road Tony has traveled to reach this point, it is evident focus and dedication played a large role in his success.

And, to quote Tony:

God played a big role in . . . getting on the right track of life. I have a lot of people to thank along the way. It was a long way to come. The most important thing is I got here.

This past week was finals week at UNI. And, I want to commend Tony Davis for his commitment and dedication—not only to sports but also to academics.

Next year, Tony Davis will return to UNI—again for two reasons. Tony will be finishing up his academic degree while also serving as an assistant wrestling coach.

UNI has a long tradition of excellence in training teachers.

This legacy of excellence in education will be continued as Tony has an opportunity to train wrestlers to succeed—both on and off the mat.

And so, I salute Tony Davis, his teammates, Coach Mark Manning, and the University of Northern Iowa for supporting each student on and off the mat.

Go Panthers!